

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Office of the Inspector General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 19, 2003

Caregiver at a Group Home Arrested for Patient Abuse

United States Attorney Roscoe C. Howard, Jr. and District of Columbia Inspector General Charles C. Maddox announced today that an investigation conducted by the Office of Inspector General has led to the arrest of Elisha Bemah, 28*, for abuse of a vulnerable adult. Bemah was employed as a caregiver at a group home for mentally retarded individuals. The Metropolitan Police Department Sixth District, Department of Human Services Incident Management & Investigations Unit (IMIU) and the OIG Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) jointly investigated the reported physical abuse. The investigation culminated in the arrest of Bemah on the charge of Assault in violation of D.C. Criminal Code § 22-404(a), an offense with a maximum penalty of imprisonment of not more than 180 days or a fine of no more than \$1, 000 or both. Herring's initial appearance was November 17.

The OIG Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the United States Attorney's Office will prosecute the case jointly.

The MFCU, which was created in March 2000, handled this case as part of an effort called the Guardian Angel Project (GAP). GAP is a comprehensive program designed to deter and when appropriate, punish health care providers who intentionally abuse or neglect vulnerable persons under their care. Among the institutions covered by GAP are nursing homes, group homes for adults who are mentally retarded and facilities for mentally ill persons. These institutions are a main focus of the MFCU's outreach and education efforts. MFCU investigators and attorneys make presentations to industry and professional groups covering topics such as detecting abuse, prompt and accurate reporting of abuse and the most effective ways to work with law enforcement agencies. Also, emphasis is placed on outreach and education efforts aimed at senior citizen groups, consumer groups and advocates for elderly and other vulnerable citizens.

*Bemah's DOB is 11/18/75